

Message Text

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S E C R E T SAIGON 3845

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, INS, VS, VN

SUBJECT: GVN/ PRG NEGOTIATIONS

REF: SAIGON 3602

1. EDUCATION MINISTER NGO KHAC TINH INFORMED EMBOFF MAR 8. THAT GVN DELEGATION WILL DEPART FOR PARIS ON MARCH QW OR 13 TO COMMENCE TALKS WITH RGP AT LA CELLE ST. CLOUD. TINH STATED THAT THE COMPOSITION OF THE GVN AND PRG DELEGATIONS WILL BE ANNOUNCED MARCH 10. THE GVN DELEGATION, HEADED BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER NGUYEN LUU VIEN, WILL INCLUDE NGUYEN NGOC HUY, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PROGRESSIVE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT, NGUYEN NGOC AN, FORMER MINISTER OF OPEN ARMS AND INFORMATION AND CLOSE TO VICE PRESIDENT HUONG, AND NGUYEN PHUONG THIEP, WHO IS ALREADY IN PARIS, WHERE HE SERVED WITH THE GVN DELEGATION TO THE PEACE TALKS. ADVISORS TO THE DELEGATION WILL INCLUDE FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN VAN DO, PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE FOR POLITICAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS TRAN VAN AN AND FORMER OPEN ARMS MINISTER NGUYEN XUAN PHONG, WHO HAS SERVED AS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE GVN DELEGATION TO THE PARIS PEACE TALKS.

2. COMMENT: THE GVN DELEGATION APPEARS WELL BALANCED FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE FORTHCOMING DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS. THE SELECTION OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TO HEAD THE DELEGATION REFLECTS THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE GVN IS APPROACHING THESE TALKS, AND DR. LUU VIEN SEEMS TO US A MUCH BETTER CHOICE THAN OTHERS WHOSE NAMES WERE BRUIED ABOUT SAIGON AS PROBABLE NOMINEES. ALTHOUGH
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NOTCONSIDERED PARTICULARLY INTELLIGENT NOR PERSONALLY PRESTIGIOUS, LUNN VIEN OBVIOUSLY ENJOYS THE PRESIDENT' S CONFIDENCE AND WILL CARRY OUT INSTRUCTIONS. HIS PREVIOUS SERVICE WITH THE NVA 308 TH DIV, AND HIS PERSONAL GENIALITY, SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE HIM A MEASURE OF RAPPORT WITH THE OTHER SIDE WHICH SHOULD FACILITATE THE SEARCH

FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION.

3. THE SENIOR ADVISER TO THE DELEGATION, TRAN VAN DO, IS SOUTH VIETNAM' S MOST DISTINGUISHED ELDER STATESMAN. THE INCLUSION OF PROFESSOR HUY IS NOT ONLY A SIGNIFICANT GESTURE TO THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONALIST OPPOSITION ELEMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, BUT ALSO INCLUDES ANOTHER MAN OF VERY GREAT ABILITY AND PERSONAL PRESTIGE. NGUYEN NGOC AN, BORN IN 1915 IN TAY NINH, OWES HIS PRESENCE ON THE DELEGATION PROBABLY TO HIS PAST ASSOCIATIONS WITH VICE PRESIDENT HUONG. AN' S BACKGROUND IS IN FRENCH CUSTOMS (1936-1945) AND TEACHING (HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL 1955-1964). WILY OLD TRAN VAN AN HAS BEEN IN AND OUT OF VIETNAMESE POLITICS SINCE THE LATE 1930' S, BUT IS MORE REMARKABLE FOR HIS SURVIVAL THAN FOR CURRENT EFFECTIVENESS; NEVERTHELESS, HE PROVIDES THE PALACE WITH A TRUSTED PRESENCE ON THE DELEGATION.
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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